

the diversity of opinion which exists among the profession, and the indefinite line of practice laid down by most writers for the treatment of such affections; but which, I hope, the explanation afforded will tend to remove, as it exhibits, I am of opinion, that the general treatment should bear reference to the cause, and the particular to the local affection, in these cases; and thus may bleeding and bark prove not incompatible remedies with each other, each having its due share and respective weight in the treatment.

Bath, May, 10, 1843.

PATHOLOGY AND TREATMENT OF RICKETS AND MOLLITIES OSSIUM.

THE diseases which exert the greatest influence over the condition of the bones, altering them from their normal state, are scrofulous affections, to which rickets and mollities ossium may be considered as belonging. In these two diseases, the earthy matter of the bone becomes diminished, and the bone falls into a state such as if it had been macerated in muriatic acid; supple, flexible, and ill-adapted to serve as a support to the other organs of the body. The cartilage itself itself submits to an essential alteration, and is incapable of being converted by boiling into gelatine.

Concurrently with these changes, phosphate of lime is eliminated in large quantities with the urine. This salt, otherwise little soluble, and discharged generally only in small quantity by the kidneys, is, according to Berzelius, readily soluble in lactic acid; anything, therefore, which causes a superabundance of this acid in the system is capable of depriving the organism of a large share of the earthy matter of the bones. Sugar of milk, grape sugar, starch, and gum, are readily converted into lactic acid, but they are so in the stomach only when digestion is ill-performed, in which case lactic acid may be an abundant product in the system.

Rickets and mollities ossium, therefore, are not essentially diseases of the bones, but seem to be results of imperfect digestion or nutrition; to improve which is consequently our first indication. None of the substances readily converted into lactic acid should be taken, as sugar, starch, gum, &c., nor even milk (rickets are often the consequence of children having been too long suckled), but animal food and such other as is freely digestible should be chosen, in aid of which we ought to employ such medicines as may restore the general tone of the system.—*Marchand, in Journ. de Pharm. et de Chimie.*

ON LUNAR INFLUENCE; BEING A FOURTH CONTRIBUTION TO PROLEPTICS.* By T. LAYCOCK, M.D., Physician to the Dispensary, York.

THE opinions hitherto held by scientific men on the validity of the doctrine of lunar influence have been remarkably discordant. The sceptical have always been unphilosophical in their scepticism, and the believers up to the time of Mead were credulous in their belief; both agreed, however, in admitting or rejecting the doctrine without much examination. As it has had, and may have, an important bearing on proleptical science, I propose to review the subject in a spirit of impartiality.

The phases of the moon have measured time from a very early period. Mr. Cullimore traces evidence of a lunar division of time on the bricks of Nineveh and Babylon, and Sir G. Wilkinson is of opinion that the circumstance of the god Lunus being the dispenser of time, and represented as noting off years upon the palm-branch, leads to the idea that in former years the Egyptians calculated by lunar instead of solar years. The hieroglyphic of a month, which is a lunar crescent, shows, also, that their months were originally lunar. The derivation of the word *month* in our own language, and of *monat* and *Μῆν* in the German and Greek, sufficiently proves that the moon was likewise the measurer of the months at a very early period in the history of European nations.

This connection of the moon with the measure of time seems to have brought that planet into relation with the religious rites of ancient nations, as the Egyptians and Jews; and also to have given origin (in part) to the *mythological* idea so extensively prevalent of a lunar influence on marriage and child-bearing. Even the barbarous Greenlanders, as Egede informs us, believe in this superstitious notion. They imagine that the moon visits their wives now and then; that staring long at the full moon will make a maid pregnant, &c. Among the ancient nations the general idea was, that the lunar influence varied according to the age of the moon. Bombasties, the Egyptian Diana, was not equally favourable to parturient females and their offspring in her different phases. Among the Jews the full moon was believed to be lucky, and the two other disastrous. "The full moon," says the Rabbi Abravanel, "is propitious to new-born children, but if the child be born in the increase or wane, the horns of that planet cause death; or, if it survive, it is

* See LANCET, Vol. I., 1842-43, pp. 124 160, 423, 929.

generally guilty of some enormous crime.”* The Greeks and Romans entertained a similar idea respecting the lunar phases. The general opinion seems to have been that the moon was propitious in proportion as its luminous face was on the increase.† The ancient Greeks considered the day of the full moon to be the best day for marriage. Euripides makes Agamemnon answer, when asked on what day he intends to be married,—

“Ὅταν Σελήνης εὐτυχὴς ἔλθῃ κύκλος.

“When the bless’d season of full moon is come.”—*Iphig.*, act v., 717.

Hesiod asserted that the fourth day of the moon was propitious, but the eighteenth was bad, especially to the female. The Lacedæmonians thought it unlucky to march to war before the full of the moon, or to make commanders at any other time than the new moon.‡ But illustrations of this kind might be multiplied to a great extent. Those who are curious in the matter will do well to refer to Dr. Prichard’s work already quoted, to “The Doctor,” vol. iii., p. 186, to Dr. Milligan’s “Curiosities of Medical Experience,” vol. i., p. 113, and (if they can get it) to “Astrologia Restaurata, by William Ramesey, Gent., Student in Astrology, Physick,” &c., folio, Lond., 1653. This Ramesey was probably the son of Davy Ramesey, celebrated by Scott, in the “Fortunes of Nigel,” and who says of the nativity of the Duke of Buckingham,—

“Full moon and high sea,
Great man shalt thou be;
Red dawning, stormy sky,
Bloody death shalt thou die.”—Chap. vi.

The influence of the moon was acknowledged in magic and alchemy, as well as in mythology and astrology. Trallian directs a magical ring for the colic to be prepared on the seventeenth or twenty-first day of the moon.§ In Ben Jonson’s “Alchemist,” a play which, from the known accuracy of its author, may be considered as representing the swindlers in that line who were his contemporaries, TRIBULATION says,—

“But how long time,

Sir, must the saints expect?

“SUBTLE. Let me see,
How’s the moon now? Eight, nine, ten days
hence,

He will be silver potate: then three days
Before he citronise,—some fifteen days.”

Act iii., scene 1.

Medical science could not escape being in-

volved in these notions. Indeed, the idea of a physiological and pathological influence is directly connected with the mythological; but this idea was conjoined with the doctrine of septenaries, and necessarily so, because the observed vital period of seven days was contemporaneous with the lunar period of seven days, or one week. In the second century we find Galen discussing this connection between the moon’s influence and critical days, *in extenso*, and with great ingenuity, and his doctrines revived, but not improved, by Actuarius in the twelfth. That these doctrines influenced medical language and practice to a great extent might be proved by various historical facts. For example, in Matth. xviii., verse 13, of a person described as falling oft into the fire and oft into the water, it is said that he (*σεληνιαζεται*) is affected by the moon. Trallian, using the same word, terms *epileptics*, *σηληνιακοι*.* Apuleius, a Latin author, also terms epileptics *lunatici*. In Mr. Wright’s “Biographia Literaria” it is stated, that one day John of Beverley entered the nunnery of Wetadun (supposed to be Wetton, in Yorkshire), where the abbess called him to visit a sister in whom the operation of bleeding had been followed by dangerous symptoms. When he was informed that she had been bled on the fourth day of the moon he blamed the abbess severely for her ignorance; “for,” said he, “I remember that Archbishop Theodore, of blessed memory, said, that bleeding was very dangerous at the time when both the light of the moon and the flood of the ocean were on the increase.” This notion influenced medical practice to the time of Van Swieten.

Mead was the first of modern writers who considered the doctrine of lunar influence in a truly philosophical spirit. His work on the subject is still worthy perusal.† He anticipated the doctrine of atmospheric tides. He declared that the moon’s influence would be found to be greatest at apogee and perigee. He showed, from various calculations, that the atmospheric pressure on the body might vary in consequence of the moon’s influence on the atmosphere, to the extent of three thousand and sixty-two pounds, forcibly adding, “Fieri tamen nequit quin magnum sæpe momentum habeat tam insignis variatio.”—P. 28. In short, Mead brought the subject before the profession as completely as the state of science at the time would permit. The last century has been more prolific in correct and extended observations on the subject than the preceding ten. These I shall attempt to collate and arrange.

* Basnages, *Histoire des Juifs*, IV., chap. xi.

† Prichard, *Analysis of the Egyptian Mythology*, 8vo., Lond., 1819, p. 72.

‡ *Archæol. Atticæ*, by Z. Bogan, 5th ed., 4to., Oxford, 1658, p. 327.

§ *Lib. x.*, cap. i.

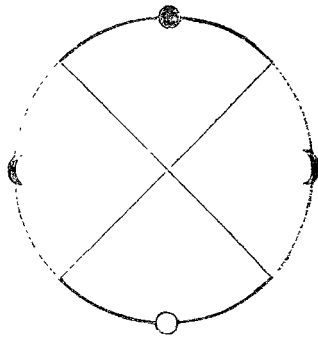
* *Lib. i.*, cap. xv.

† *De Imperio Solis ac Lunæ in Corpora Humana, et Morbis inde Oriundis.* Ed. Altera, 8vo., Lond., 1746.

Influence of the Moon on Fevers and on the Spread and Duration of Epidemics.

Testa quotes Gillespie, or Symmons, as having communicated to the "London Medical Journal," for 1785, cases in which ulcers showed an evident connection with the moon's changes, and also refers to remarks to the effect that the knowledge of lunar influence may be used proleptically in the treatment of intermittents. Balfour republished his tract, at about the same time, at Edinburgh, by the special recommendation of Cullen. It is worthy of remark that Balfour also refers to the proleptical use of the knowledge of lunar influence. His views are as follows:—1. That in Bengal, fevers of every denomination are, in a remarkable manner, connected with and affected by the revolutions of the moon. 3. That in Bengal, a constant and particular attention to the revolution of the moon is of the greatest importance in the cure and prevention of fevers. 3. That the influence of the moon in fevers prevails in a similar manner in every inhabited part of the globe. 4. That the whole doctrine of the crisis of fevers may be readily explained from the premises established respecting the influence of the moon in these disorders at the full and change.* The fever which came under Balfour's observation in Bengal was a bilious intermittent, appearing most commonly as a tertian or quotidian. The moon's influence was exhibited at full and change by the greater number of attacks and relapses which took place in the three days preceding and the three days following each of those periods. The first and second propositions are alone substantiated by his observations. In considering his fourth proposition he was quite unconscious of the general law I have before demonstrated. Ambrose Parè observed that people were more liable to be attacked by the plague at the full moon. Diemerbroeck (as quoted by Mead) also relates that in the plague of 1636, two or three days before and after the new and full moon, the disease was more violent, and that more persons were seized at those times than at any other, and in a more fatal manner. Ramazzini asserts that the influence of the new and full moon, but particularly of the former, was matter of general observation during the prevalence of an epidemic fever at Modena. Balfour quoted Dr. Lind, as entertaining views similar to his own, and he has since been supported by several physicians and surgeons of the Indian armies. Dr. Scot asserted that the influence of the moon on the human body in India was well known to every medical practitioner. It was universally acknowledged by the doctors of all

colours, of all castes, and of all countries. Dr. Farquhar corroborated these assertions. Mr. Pearson, an Indian surgeon, declares "that a careful observation of disease in that climate will corroborate the inferences of Dr. Balfour that the attacks and fatal terminations of febrile disease and of dysentery, retention in the intestinal canal, aggravations of spasmodic and nervous affections, take place most frequently during the lunar periods, *i. e.*, in fifty hours before and after the new and full moon."* Dr. Kennedy, in his work on the Epidemic Cholera, also declares, "The constitution here [India], both of native and denizen, is assuredly under lunar influence, or, what is the same thing, under the influence of the changes of weather, which as invariably accompany the changes of the planet as the ocean." (chap. vi.) No recent writer has entered so fully into this part of the subject as Mr. Orton.† Individual cases which came under his own observation are related in support of the doctrine, and establish it apparently beyond controversy. One gentleman, for example, had a paroxysm of intermittent fever every lunar month, at the new moon, for two years and eight months. For two successive years he had one paroxysm only in the month, and that was *invariably* at the new moon (p. 204, also 394). Mr. Orton constructs the following diagram in support of Balfour's views:—



The black lines are the unhealthy periods; the dotted lines the more favourable periods. Each period extends for three days and three-quarters before and after the full and new moon, or the quarters. Mr. Orton then enters into a number of details as to the day of the moon on which the cholera appeared at various places in India, and presents the result of forty-six instances in the following table:—

* On the Diseases of Warm Climates. London Medical and Physical Journal, vol. xi., p. 204.

† On the Epidemic Cholera of India, 2nd ed., 1831.

* A Treatise on the Influence of the Moon in Fevers. By Francis Balfour, M.D. 8vo. Edinburgh, 1785.

Days before and after full or change.

Appearances of the cholera	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 and 7½ (the quarter).
	16	15	5	5	2	3	No instance.

The first column contains the instances in which the cholera appeared on the day of the *syzygie*, as well as that before or after. The attacks which commenced on the plenilunar, or light half, of the moon, were twenty eight; on the novilunar, or dark half, eight. Mr. Orton consequently infers, "that the moon's syzygies have a very marked influence in producing the disease, and the quarters in removing it." The progress of the cholera in York, Glasgow, and Manchester, did not exactly corroborate Mr. Orton's views, as the following tables show:—

Progress of Cholera in York from June 2nd to August, 13th, 1832,—

	New Cases per diem.	Deaths per diem.
At quadratures, including the day preceding and following	5.40	1.93
On other days	5.63	1.72
On three days at new and full moon	5.46	2.00
On three days at quarters	5.33	1.96

In Glasgow, from Feb. 13th to May 24th, 1832,—

	New Cases per diem.	Deaths per diem.
On three days at quadratures	9.52	5.69
On other days	11.42	5.80
On three days at new and full moons	8.09	4.30
At quarters	11.90	6.76

In Manchester from 1st to 23rd August,—

On three days at quadratures, 17.77 new cases per diem.

On other days, 20.71 new cases per diem.

The difference in the results between these tables and Mr. Orton's may, indeed, be attributable to the difference of climate, for we have seen how more regularly the atmospheric tides recur within the tropics than the temperate zones. Besides, we can scarcely set off *negative* results against the numerous *positive* observations detailed by various individuals, and all leading to the same result. And, in fact, these observers are borne out by what is noticed in other tropical countries. "Him fever," says the Negro, in the West Indies, "shall go when the water come low. Him always come hot when the tide high."* "Major Moore says that near the tropics, especially in situations where the tide of the sea has a great rise and fall, scarcely any person, and certainly no one affected with feverish or nervous symptoms, is exempted

from extraordinary sensations at the period of the spring-tides."* The arriero, or muleteer, of Peru takes care not to unsaddle his mules in the *creciente* or increase of the moon, until they have cooled, otherwise they would be disabled by abscesses, which would rapidly form on the shoulders or loins.†

Lunar Influence in Affections of the Nervous System.

It is yet a popular opinion that epilepsy, insanity, and asthma, recur at intervals regulated by the moon. Mead mentions a case of convulsions in a young female, the paroxysms of which corresponded in their accession with the flow of the tide, and in their cessation with the ebb. Brookes, a popular writer in his day, recommends the remedies for epilepsy to be given a day or two before the new and full moon, as the disease returns at the periods of the moon, especially the new and full. He mentions another convulsive disease in which the accessions of the fits keep exact pace with the phases of the moon.‡ A very minutely detailed case of periodic asthma was communicated to the Royal Academy of Madrid by Dr. Franzieri, physician to the court.§ The history extends over a period of twenty-one years; but it is enough to state here, that for four years the days of intermission counted from the very day of the new moon to that preceding the eve of the full moon, and from the day of the full moon to the day before the eve of the new one. In a case of hystericalgia detailed by Dr. Rutter, he says, "The pain was also greatly increased at the new and full moon. She first directed my attention to this circumstance, and I observed it for many years afterwards to recur with a degree of regularity which leaves no room to doubt the fact, to whatever cause it may be ascribed."|| Dr. Ebers, of Breslau, has lately published an interesting example of somnambulism in a boy, aged eleven years, and which he watched himself closely. The paroxysms came on regularly every full moon.¶

* The Doctor, vol. iii., p. 179.

† Peru as it is; by Dr. Smith.

‡ Gen. Pract. of Physic, vol. i., p. 279, 6th edition.

§ See Lond. Med. and Phy. Journal, vol. iii., p. 401.

|| Edin. Med. and Surg. Jour., vol. iv., p. 170.

¶ Casper's Wochenschrift, numbers 46, 47 (1838).

* The Doctor, vol. iii., p. 179.

Influence of the Moon on Insanity.

The evidence on this point is conflicting. Dr. Arnold says that he could never clearly and certainly perceive any such lunar influence.* In the annual report of the State Lunatic Asylum, Worcester, Massachusetts, a table of fifty cases of periodical excitement is given, and their relations to the moon.

There occurred, on the average,—

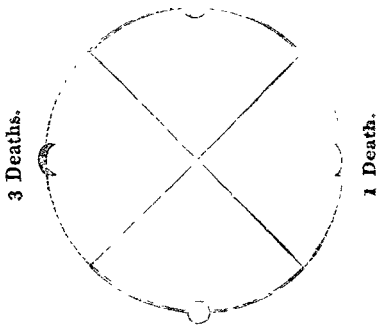
At the new moon	20
middle of ditto	13
At the first quarter.....	15
middle of ditto	11
At full moon	12
middle of ditto	11
At last quarter	13
middle of ditto	18

The periods, however, in one half were not exoteric, but esoteric, in their origin ; for in twenty-five the paroxysms occurred at very nearly regular intervals of four, six, eight, and twelve weeks. In one the intervals were tertian. These cases should have been separated from the others. M. Daguin, physician to the Lunatic Hospital at Chambery (Savoy), made numerous observations, and was decidedly of opinion that the moon exercises a constant and real influence on insane people. Dr. Michael Allen strenuously advocates the doctrine.† He divides the phases of the moon into four periods of increased and diminished excitement: the former commence two days before new and full moon, and continue for four days after; the latter commence three days before the quarters and continue for four days after. In fact, the division of the lunation corresponds almost exactly with Mr. Orton's; his unfavourable periods answering to Dr.

Allen's periods of increased excitement, as the following diagram shows:—

Diagram of Dr. Allen's Observations.

15 Deaths.



11 Deaths.

The latter author appeals to a table of deaths which occurred in his establishment, the result is as follows:—At full moon 11 died; new moon, 15; first quarter, 1; last quarter three died. But even this table is nullified by the experience of the Retreat. Mr. Thurnam kindly furnished me with details.

Deaths at the Retreat for forty-four years, arranged on Dr. Allen's hypothesis:—At full moon, 33; new moon, 40; first quarter, 34; last quarter, 32.

The plus negatives the minus. I may add here that MM. Leuret and Metivie made observations on the frequency and irritability of the pulse of insane people at the moon's phases during August and September. The patients at the Salpetriere and Maison de Santé d'Ivry were examined:—*

	Last quarter.	New moon.	First quarter.	Full moon.
Frequency of the pulse at....	85.67	81.62	80.55	79.80
Per cent. in whom it was } quicken'd at	57.12	34.72	34.72	23.52

I have had asthmatic and epileptic patients who complained of lunar influence, but I could never satisfactorily ascertain that it was exerted. The paroxysms certainly occurred at intervals of a lunar month, and about the time of a lunation; but this might be simply a coincidence of the esoteric cycle with the lunar, and nothing more. A medical friend informs me of a case in which the patient is much more easily excited by alcholic drinks at the full moon than at any other time. Chatterton, like Milton, imagined his intellect was more vigorous at the full moon. ‡

Other Diseases and Functions under Lunar Influence.

The very ancient doctrine that the periodical change in the sex is under lunar influence has still its advocates. Dr. Flachs, a German critic, in a review of Dr. Davis' work on Midwifery, controverts an opinion of that writer to the contrary. He says that the fact is well ascertained, and that the full moon is most influential. Mead quotes cases to prove that leucorrhœal discharges are under lunar influence. "It is a fact worthy of remark," says Mr. Lambert,† "that the new and full moon are the periods at which the Kookies generally commence their operation of catching the wild gyalls, from having observed that at these changes the two

* Observations on Lunacy, &c., vol. i., p. 324

† Cases of Insanity. 8vo., 1831.

‡ Works, edited by Southey, 1803, vol. i., p. 34.

* Lond. Med. and Surg. Jour., vol. iv., p. 688.

† Account of the Bos Frontalis, or Gyll. Linn. Trans., vol. vii., p. 305.

sexes are most inclined to associate. The same observation has often been made to me by our elephant-catchers." In the earlier volumes of the "Philosophical Transactions" are histories of *hæmorrhages* which broke out at lunar periods. Mead relates a curious instance of this kind. Dr. Pitcairne was seized at a country seat near Edinburgh with a bleeding from the nose and faintness, at the exact hour of the new moon, namely, nine o'clock, a.m. On returning to Edinburgh he was informed that Mr. Cockburn, professor of philosophy, had died, suddenly, at the same hour, from hæmorrhage from the lungs, and also that five or six of his patients had been seized with hæmorrhages. The barometer was lower at that hour than either he or his friend Dr. Gregory had ever observed it. *The births and deaths* of mankind generally have been supposed to be under lunar influence. It was formerly supposed in the Netherlands that fat people died at the flood, and thin spare people at the ebb. Among the wonders of the isle and city of Cadiz one is, that the sick never die there while the tide is rising, but always during the ebb. Dr. Moseley made out a list of persons who had died aged from one hundred and thirteen to one hundred and sixty-nine years, to prove that very old people die at the new or full moon. He also infers from the times of death of forty illustrious persons, that the same rule holds good with mankind in general. Three or four years ago Mr. Procter (now resident medical officer at the York County Hospital) made me out a list of the births, with their dates, which had occurred in the practice of Mr. James Allen, of this city, during the five years from 1831 to 1835 inclusive. On arranging these according to the changes of the moon the result was as follows:—Number of births at new moon, 151; first quarter, 129; full moon, 131; last quarter, 154. The day before and the day after the day of change were included in the estimate. The whole number of births were 1403; of lunations, 247; of days included in the lunations, 741, or 247×3 .

It is remarkable that the ancient doctrine of lunar influence on vegetation is still practically applied in some tropical countries. "Herbs set in the wane of the moon," says William Ramesey, quoting this doctrine, "do not thrive well; vines, to check their growth, should be pruned in the wane; timber cut to keep well," &c. Dr. Robertson asserts that in the West Indies all sorts of vegetables are fuller of sap at the new and full moon; the colonists, therefore, abstain from cutting wood at these periods, but sugar-canes are cut and castor-oil nuts are gathered at these seasons, the latter being supposed to yield one-fifth more oil at those times than at any other. This influence of the moon is still acknowledged, at least in Cuba, as Mr. Backhouse informs us, in the account of his travels,

lately published. The moon also guides the agricultural operations in Peru. "The maize crops," says Dr. Smith, in his work before quoted, "the farmers always harvest in the '*menguante*,' or decrease of the moon; for it is a fact, known to every husbandman, that if they collect the crop in the '*creciente*,' or increase of the moon, it will not keep free of moths for three months, even though allowed the advantage of being left in the husk." Around Lima the farmer takes care not to sow in the *creciente*, or the wood-cutter to cut timber, especially willow and elder, or it soon decays, as Dr. Smith found out by his own experience.

It has been supposed that the moon exercises an attractive power on the fluids of living structures, like that exhibited on the great masses of water on the globe. I think this hypothesis need not be discussed or noticed further. It has also been supposed that the *light* of the moon has a direct influence on vital function. The sun's rays may certainly be so altered by impinging on the moon, that when reflected from the latter they may have a chemical and physiological action very different from those proceeding directly from the former. Testa discusses the question at considerable length.* Supposing it to be proved that the moon's light have an injurious influence, I think it scarcely belongs to my subject. Shutters or an awning will at any time effectually neutralise it, so far as man is concerned. Be this as it may, there are no observations extant worthy notice.

In accordance with my previous plan I shall next proceed to compare physiological and pathological observations with meteorological phenomena, and consider whether there be any changes in the density, electric tension, or hygrometric condition of the air at the lunar phases, whether there be changes in the direction of its currents, and whether these changes have any connection with the observed changes in vital function, and how it takes place. This will form the subject of another communication.

One word on the claim to discoveries. I again repeat that the discovery of the *idea* of vital periodicity, or the first perception of that idea is not mine. It would be just as rational to claim the discovery of the fact that two and three make five, as the discovery of that idea. What I appropriate is, a *law* of vital periodicity, not *the idea*; not

* Bemerkungen über die periodischen Veränderungen und Erscheinungen im kranken und gesundem Zustande des menschlichen Körpers, Leipzig, 1790, p. 337, seq. This is a translation from the Latin of Testa. Testa's book, I may observe, contains more rational facts and arguments on the subject of vital periodicity than any work of the time that I am acquainted with. He took it up where Mead left it.

that there *are* periods (every body knows that there are), but the principle, or law, by which *duration* of certain vital periods may be reduced to a common denominator. This is mine; that the periods observed in the life of insects; the period of the incubation of the ovum, both of invertebrate and vertebrate animals; the periods of various functional acts and changes as oviposition and nidification in birds, and menstruation in females; the critical days of fevers; the periods of agues; and the periods of paroxysmal diseases, as gout and epilepsy, are all reducible to a common denominator,—are all governed, *as to duration*, by the same general law. I may be permitted to add that the demonstration (given in my last) of the identity as to length and division of the physiological, pathological, and meteorological day of twelve hours is novel. Now there is not one word of all this in the book of the unhappy man whose disgraceful letters are recorded in *THE LANCET*. He never even suspected these facts. In short, he has made no scientific discoveries whatever, and his charges of plagiarism, both against Dr. Holland and myself, are thoroughly contemptible.

York, June 6, 1843.

WOUNDS OF SEROUS MEMBRANES.

A CAVITY below is touched, its serous lining is perforated. A railing may have penetrated the peritoneum in an idle climbing boy. In this dangerous wound strive to obtain adhesion. If the membrane unite, or the bowel so adhere as to close the wound, danger is past, and you have only a simple wound to heal. The risk is, that the suppuration of the lips of the wound propagate its action over the whole cavity, producing pain, tumefaction, sympathetic fever. Subdue this by every means.”—*Sir Charles Bell*.

BIRTHS EXTRAORDINARY!—In January last a good lady of Beauval, in France, had a miscarriage, and was delivered of a female foetus about one hundred and ten days from conception, after which she soon recovered and resumed her usual occupations. About a month after, however, she was again seized with labour-pains, and gave birth to a little gentleman about one hundred and forty days old, recovering from her troubles as easily as she had done at first. Judge, readers, of the thrifty dame's surprise when, about three weeks after, she experienced symptoms that a third *Monsieur Tonson* was on the eve of his arrival; and she was actually delivered of a live manikin about one hundred and sixty-five days old from conception, who verily breathed the vital air during two long hours! This is a most extraordinary fact, *if true*, and we shall not fail to apprise our readers when this prolific lady favours the world with a fourth child from one and the same pregnancy!

ULCERATION OF THE MUCOUS MEMBRANE,

FOLLOWING THE LONG-CONTINUED

USE OF IODINE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I beg to call the attention of the profession, through the medium of your valuable Journal, to the probability of long and indiscriminate courses of iodine sometimes inducing ulceration of the mucous membranes. Of several cases which have come under my notice, tending to confirm this opinion, I will relate the two following:—

CASE 1.—Miss T., about twenty, applied to me two or three years ago; my first impression on seeing her was that she was in a confirmed consumption. She was exceedingly emaciated; her face flushed with hectic; pulse 120; and her strength greatly reduced by colliquative sweats. In addition to these symptoms she was daily expectorating a large quantity of *purulent* matter. The sounds elicited by the chest, on percussion, were, however, uniformly clear, and the respiratory murmur everywhere *perceptible*, though somewhat obscured by *râle muqueux*. There was no pectoriloquy. On noticing she had a full throat, she told me that at the recommendation of her admirer she had been taking “iodine drops” for several months, and during that time had been gradually getting thinner and weaker. I desired her immediately to discontinue the iodine, recommended nourishing diet and plenty of fresh air, and prescribed tonics with mineral acids. Though she slowly and steadily improved, and has since married her iodine friend, she continued thin and weak, suffering from cough and mucopurulent expectoration for many months, but has now thoroughly regained her former health and strength.

CASE 2.—Mrs. A., a married lady, during several weeks had been taking the compound tincture of iodine internally, and using frictions of the iodine ointment externally, for a large subcutaneous fatty tumour of the lower part of the abdomen. About three months ago she applied to me with the following symptoms: her appearance was considerably emaciated, and she complained of great debility. The pulse was weak, and not more than 40 in the minute. She had a constant and copious discharge of purulent matter from the vagina. A still larger quantity of pus was also evacuated from the *rectum* with each motion, accompanied with a good deal of uneasiness. The superficial tumour had remained unaltered; it was unattached, and external to, the abdominal muscles, and had never been affected either with heat or tenderness. It was of several years growth. On examination, the mucous membrane of the vagina